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KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

LOCKE & KEY

JOE HILL

GABRIEL RODRIGUEZ

JAY FOTOS

CASUALTIES

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RECOMMENDED FOR MATURE READERS

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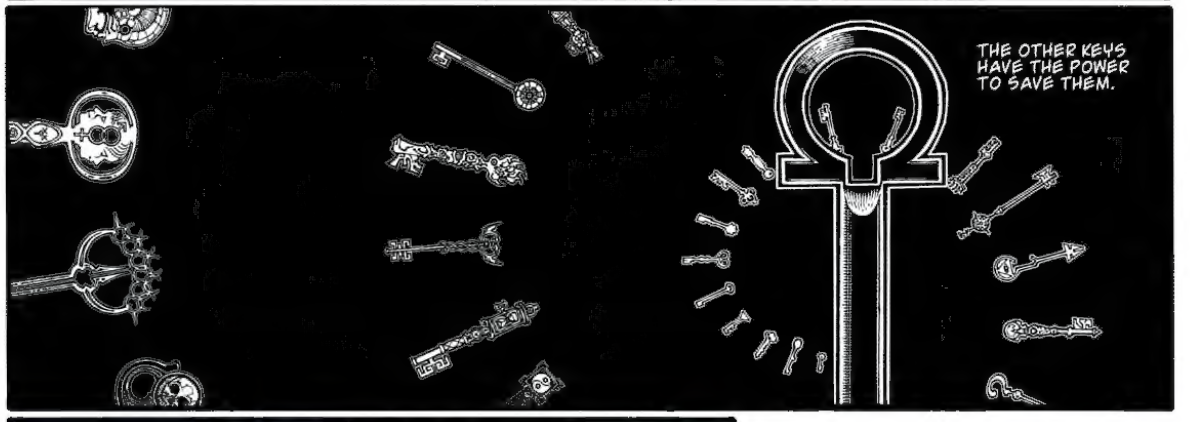

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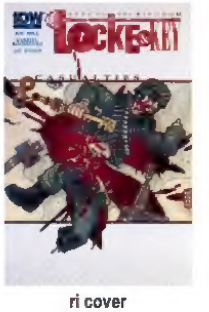

ri cover

Written by: Joe Hill • Art by: Gabriel Rodriguez
Colors by: Jay Fotos • Letters by: Robbie Robbins • Edited by: Chris Ryall

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Locke & Key created by Joe Hill and Gabriel Rodriguez
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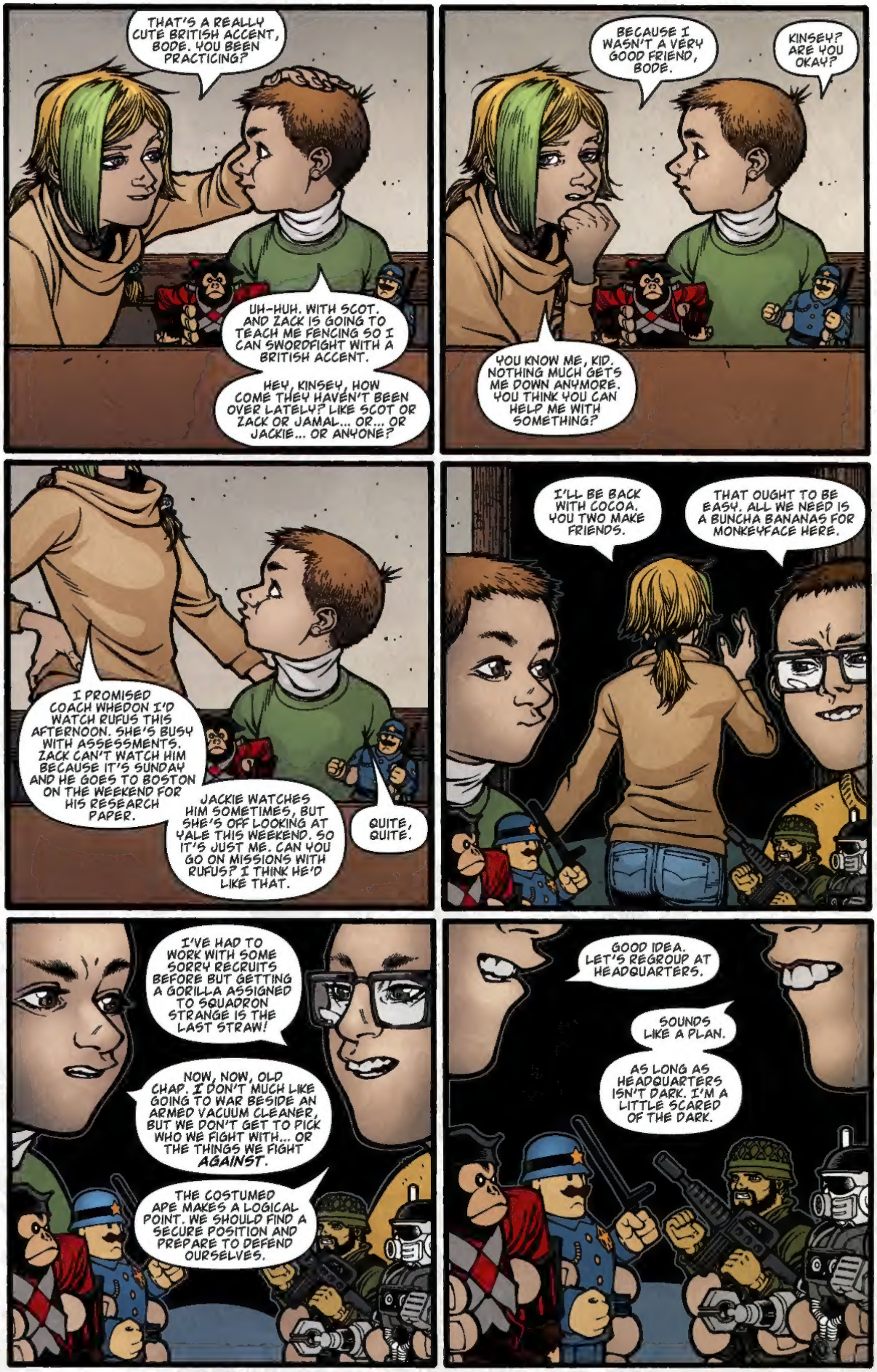
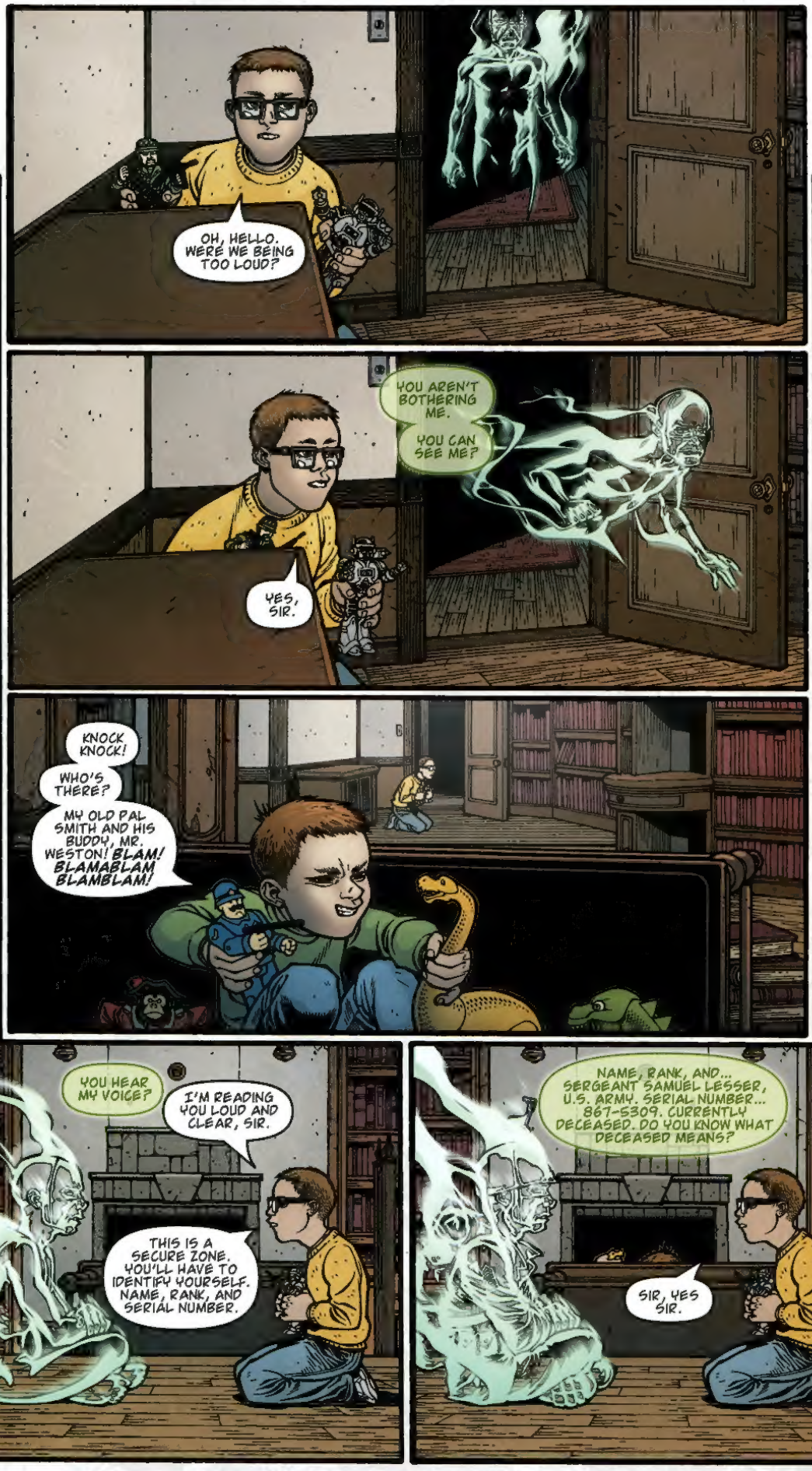
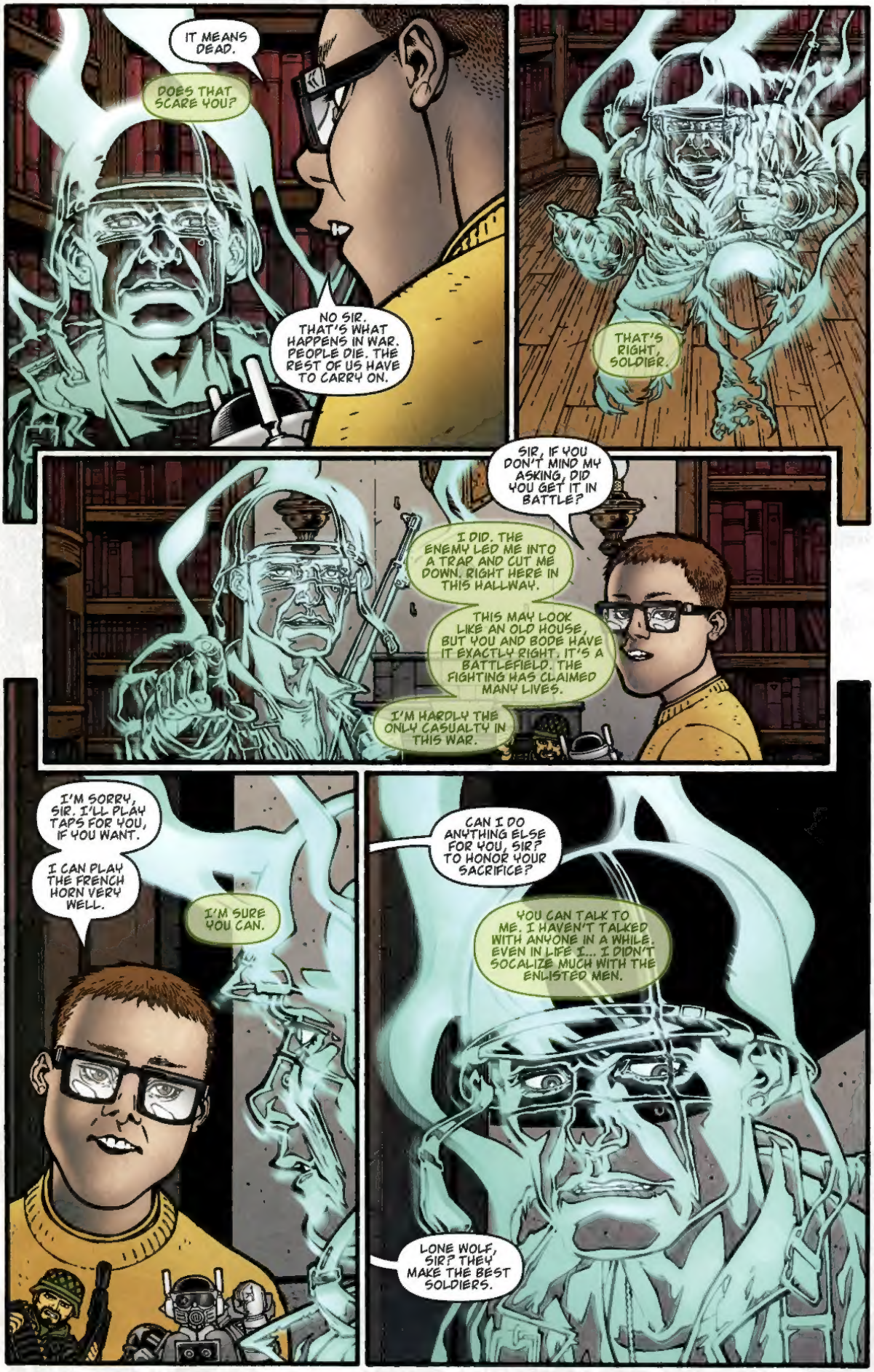
TWO-FISTED TALES OF THE UNCANNY!!
SQUADRON STRANGE!
¢49
22
• JAN • 2011
©IDW
WHEN SQUADRON STRANGE ACCEPT A MISSION FROM A GHOST, THEY FIND THEMSELVES ON THEIR MOST PERILOUS RAID EVER — STRAIGHT INTO A HAUNTED MANSION!
THIS DOES NOT COMPUTE. IT IS OUR DIRECTIVE TO STAY ALIVE... HOW CAN WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL BY TAKING ORDERS FROM THE DEAD?
WE HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF SURVIVAL BY SURRENDERING OURSELVES TO THE ENEMY!
CAN IT, TRASHCAN HEAD! THE THING WE'RE FIGHTIN' AIN'T TAKING PRISIONERS... IF HE DOESN'T KILL YOU TRYING TO GIVE YOUR COWARDLY CIRCUITS UP...
THAN I WILL!
I DON'T SEE HOW WE HAVE ANY CHOICE.
WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO TRUST THIS SHADY SPIRIT...
IF WE DON'T WANNA WIND UP JUST LIKE HIM!
SQUADRON STRANGE! AND LOCKE & KEY created by J.H. + G.R.
-JOE HILL & GABRIEL RODRÍGUEZ-
Shell-shocked Storytellers of...
"CASUALTIES"
Concussed Colorist: JAY FOTOS
Lacerated Letterer: ROBBIE ROBBINS
Ennui-Engulfed Editor: CHRIS RYALL
KEEP YOUR HANKIES HANDY, TRUE BELIEVERS... BECAUSE IN THIS ISSUE...
SOMEONE DIES

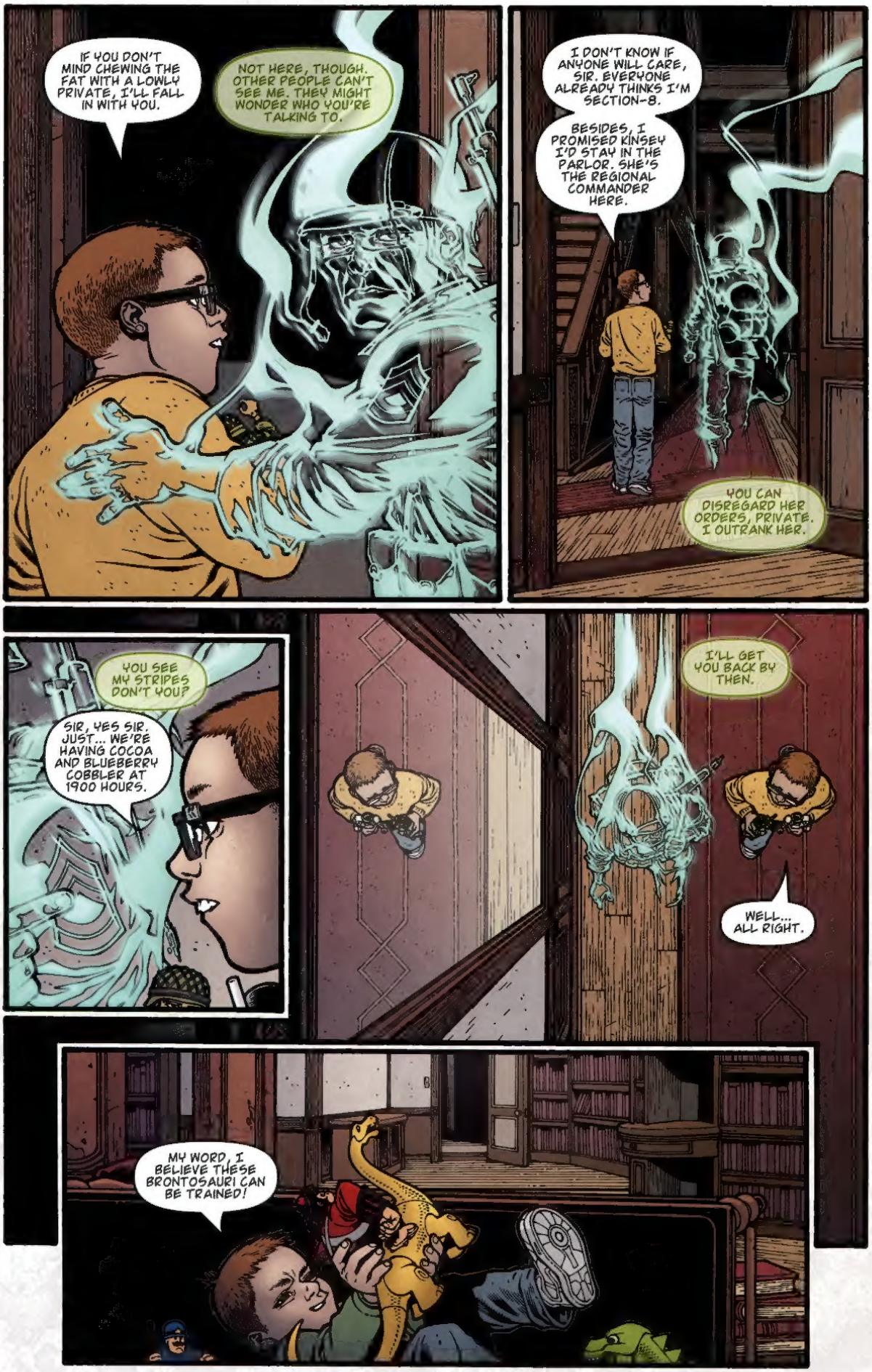
"HOLD IT RIGHT THERE. NO MONKEYING AROUND."
"I SAY, WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT, OLD CHAP? I FEAR YOU ASK THE IMPOSSIBLE OF ME!"
HANG OUT HERE AND I'LL GET YOU SOME COCOA AND WE CAN DO... WHATEVER YOU LIKE TO DO.
WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO, BUDDY? WANT TO WATCH TV?
NEGATIVE. FIRST WE NEED TO SECURE THE PERIMETER.
AFTER THAT, I WANT A RECON TEAM TO GET THE LAY OF THE LAND.
RIGHT. DO YOU JUST WANT TO SECURE THE LIVING ROOM?
WITH YOUR ASSISTANCE.
OH, BUDDY. I DON'T REALLY HAVE, YOU KNOW, ANY ACTION FIGURES.
DO YOU THINK YOU'RE UP TO THE JOB ALONE... SOLDIER?
HE WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT THIS BATTLE BY HIMSELF IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT, BY JOVE.

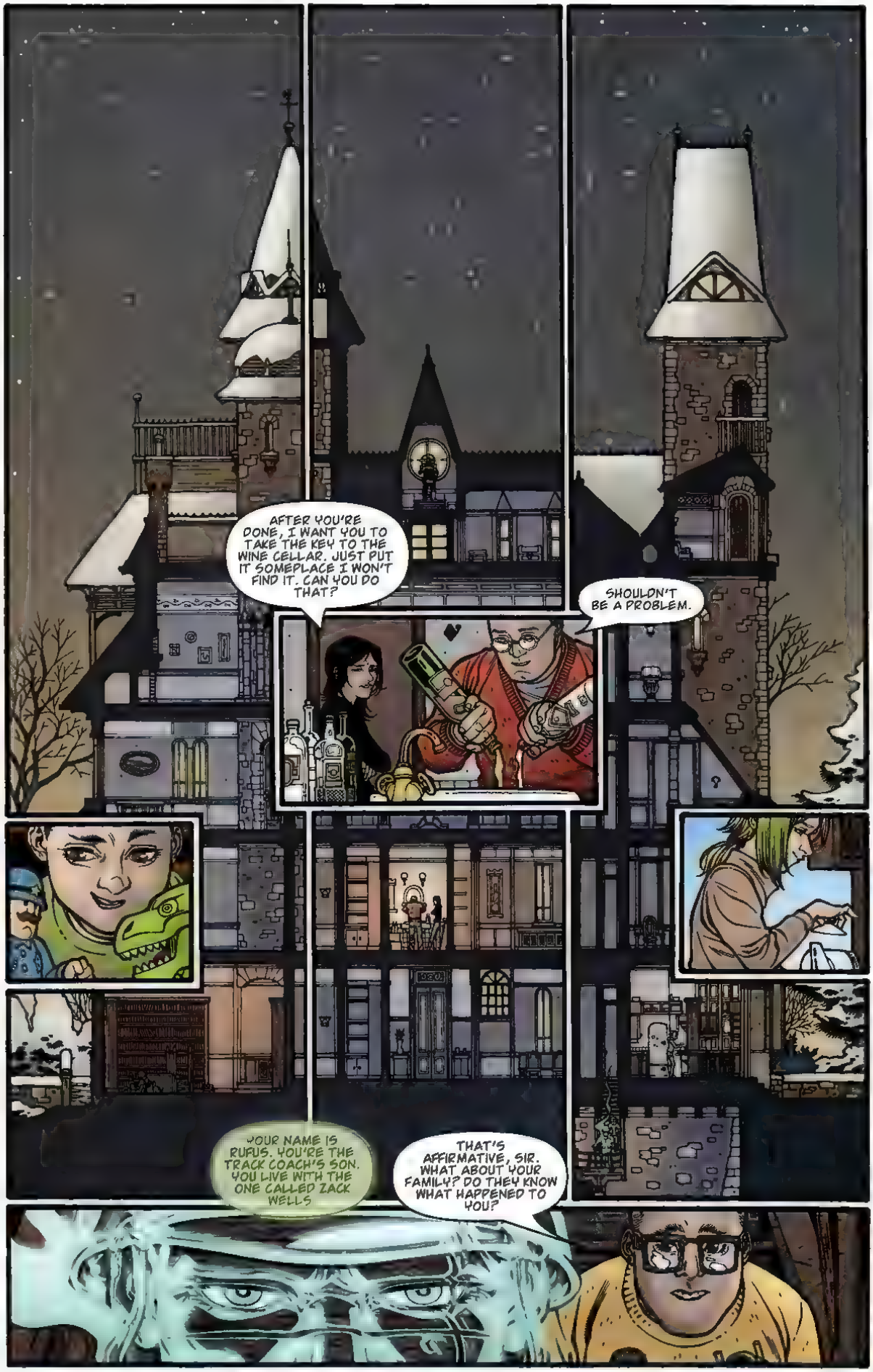

THAT'S A REALLY CUTE BRITISH ACCENT, BODE. YOU BEEN PRACTICING?
UH-HUH. WITH SCOT. AND ZACK IS GOING TO TEACH ME FENCING SO I CAN SWORDFIGHT WITH A BRITISH ACCENT.
HEY, KINSEY, HOW COME THEY HAVEN'T BEEN OVER LATELY? LIKE SCOT OR ZACK OR JAMAL... OR... OR JACKIE... OR ANYONE?
BECAUSE I WASN'T A VERY GOOD FRIEND, BODE.
KINSEY? ARE YOU OKAY?
YOU KNOW ME, KID. NOTHING MUCH GETS ME DOWN ANYMORE. YOU THINK YOU CAN HELP ME WITH SOMETHING?
I PROMISED COACH WHEDON I'D WATCH RUFUS THIS AFTERNOON. SHE'S BUSY WITH ASSESSMENTS. ZACK CAN'T WATCH HIM BECAUSE IT'S SUNDAY AND HE GOES TO BOSTON ON THE WEEKEND FOR HIS RESEARCH PAPER.
JACKIE WATCHES HIM SOMETIMES, BUT SHE'S OFF LOOKING AT YALE THIS WEEKEND. SO IT'S JUST ME. CAN YOU GO ON MISSIONS WITH RUFUS? I THINK HE'D LIKE THAT.
QUITE, QUITE.
I'LL BE BACK WITH COCOA. YOU TWO MAKE FRIENDS.
THAT OUGHT TO BE EASY. ALL WE NEED IS A BUNCHA BANANAS FOR MONKEYFACE HERE.
I'VE HAD TO WORK WITH SOME SORRY RECRUITS BEFORE BUT GETTING A GORILLA ASSIGNED TO SQUADRON STRANGE IS THE LAST STRAW!
NOW, NOW, OLD CHAP. I DON'T MUCH LIKE GOING TO WAR BESIDE AN ARMED VACUUM CLEANER, BUT WE DON'T GET TO PICK WHO WE FIGHT WITH... OR THE THINGS WE FIGHT AGAINST.
THE COSTUMED APE MAKES A LOGICAL POINT. WE SHOULD FIND A SECURE POSITION AND PREPARE TO DEFEND OURSELVES.
GOOD IDEA. LET'S REGROUP AT HEADQUARTERS.
SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN.
AS LONG AS HEADQUARTERS ISN'T DARK. I'M A LITTLE SCARED OF THE DARK.

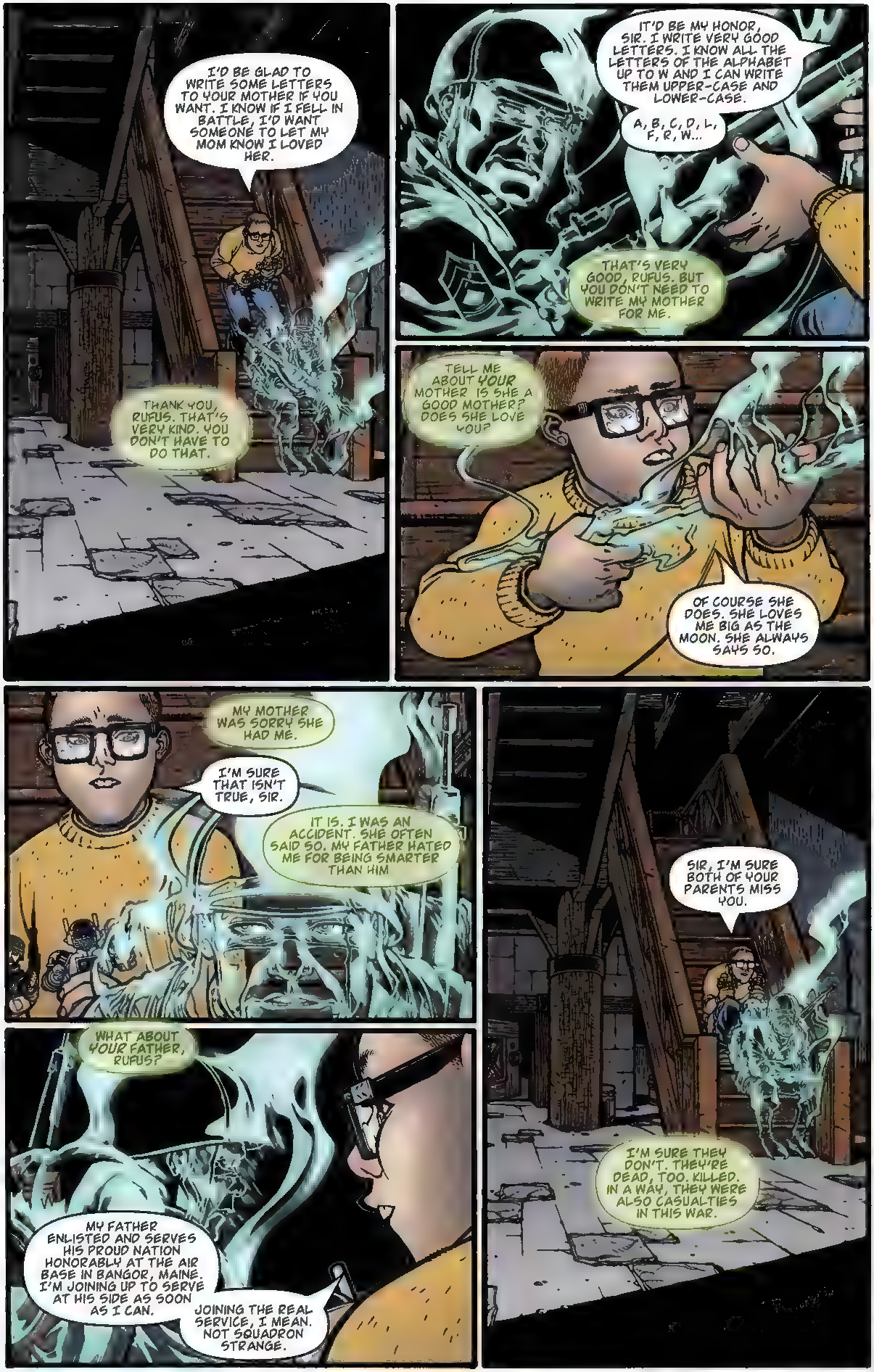
SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE, 1941... SQUADRON STRANGE FINDS THEMSELVES CUT OFF AND SURROUNDED. IN OTHER WORDS...
...THEY'VE GOT THE ENEMY RIGHT WHERE THEY WANT THEM!
OUTFLANKED... OUTNUMBERED... IT SEEMS HOPELESS! BUT IT'S ALWAYS DARKEST BEFORE THE LIGHT! I'LL HAVE TO PLAY MY BEST TO KEEP THE MORALE OF MY COMRADES UP!
WATCH OUT, JACK NIFE! THESE DANGEROUS DINOS ARE LOOKING TO TAKE A BITE OUT OF US!
YEAH, WELL, I HOPE THEY LIKE THE TASTE OF MY KNUCKLES... CAUSE I'LL BE SERVING THEM UP ALL NIGHT!
GAKGAKGAKGAKGAK
TIME TO GET PREHISTORIC ON THESE STINKIN'...


OH, HELLO. WERE WE BEING TOO LOUD?
YOU AREN'T BOTHERING ME.
YOU CAN SEE ME?
YES, SIR.
KNOCK KNOCK!
WHO'S THERE?
MY OLD PAL SMITH AND HIS BUDDY, MR. WESTON! BLAM! BLAMABLAM BLAMBLAM!
YOU HEAR MY VOICE?
I'M READING YOU LOUD AND CLEAR, SIR.
THIS IS A SECURE ZONE. YOU'LL HAVE TO IDENTIFY YOURSELF. NAME, RANK, AND SERIAL NUMBER.
NAME, RANK, AND... SERGEANT SAMUEL LESSER, U.S. ARMY. SERIAL NUMBER... 867-5309. CURRENTLY DECEASED. DO YOU KNOW WHAT DECEASED MEANS?
SIR, YES SIR.


IT MEANS DEAD.
DOES THAT SCARE YOU?
NO SIR. THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS IN WAR. PEOPLE DIE. THE REST OF US HAVE TO CARRY ON.
THAT'S RIGHT, SOLDIER.
SIR, IF YOU DON'T MIND MY ASKING, DID YOU GET IT IN BATTLE?
I DID. THE ENEMY LED ME INTO A TRAP AND CUT ME DOWN, RIGHT HERE IN THIS HALLWAY.
THIS MAY LOOK LIKE AN OLD HOUSE, BUT YOU AND BODE HAVE IT EXACTLY RIGHT. IT'S A BATTLEFIELD. THE FIGHTING HAS CLAIMED MANY LIVES.
I'M HARDLY THE ONLY CASUALTY IN THIS WAR.
I'M SORRY, SIR. I'LL PLAY TAPS FOR YOU, IF YOU WANT.
I CAN PLAY THE FRENCH HORN VERY WELL.
I'M SURE YOU CAN.
CAN I DO ANYTHING ELSE FOR YOU, SIR? TO HONOR YOUR SACRIFICE?
YOU CAN TALK TO ME. I HAVEN'T TALKED WITH ANYONE IN A WHILE. EVEN IN LIFE I... I DIDN'T SOCALIZE MUCH WITH THE ENLISTED MEN.
LONE WOLF, SIR? THEY MAKE THE BEST SOLDIERS.

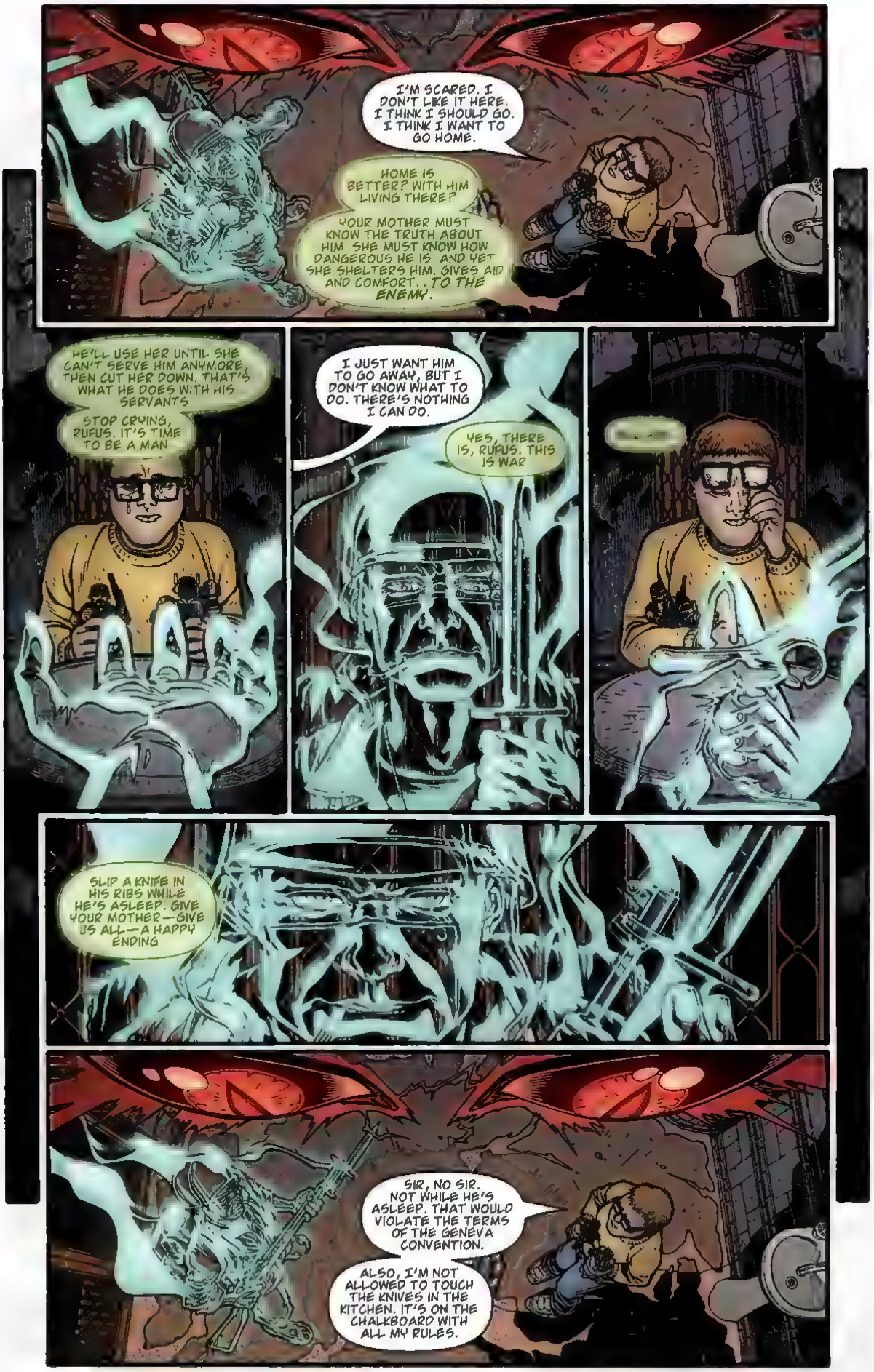

IF YOU DON'T MIND CHEWING THE FAT WITH A LOWLY PRIVATE, I'LL FALL IN WITH YOU.
NOT HERE, THOUGH. OTHER PEOPLE CAN'T SEE ME. THEY MIGHT WONDER WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO.
I DON'T KNOW IF ANYONE WILL CARE, SIR. EVERYONE ALREADY THINKS I'M SECTION-8.
BESIDES, I PROMISED KINSEY I'D STAY IN THE PARLOR. SHE'S THE REGIONAL COMMANDER HERE.
YOU CAN DISREGARD HER ORDERS, PRIVATE. I OUTRANK HER.
YOU SEE MY STRIPES DON'T YOU?
SIR, YES SIR. JUST... WE'RE HAVING COCOA AND BLUEBERRY COBBLER AT 1900 HOURS.
I'LL GET YOU BACK BY THEN.
WELL... ALL RIGHT.
MY WORD, I BELIEVE THESE BRONTOSAURI CAN BE TRAINED!

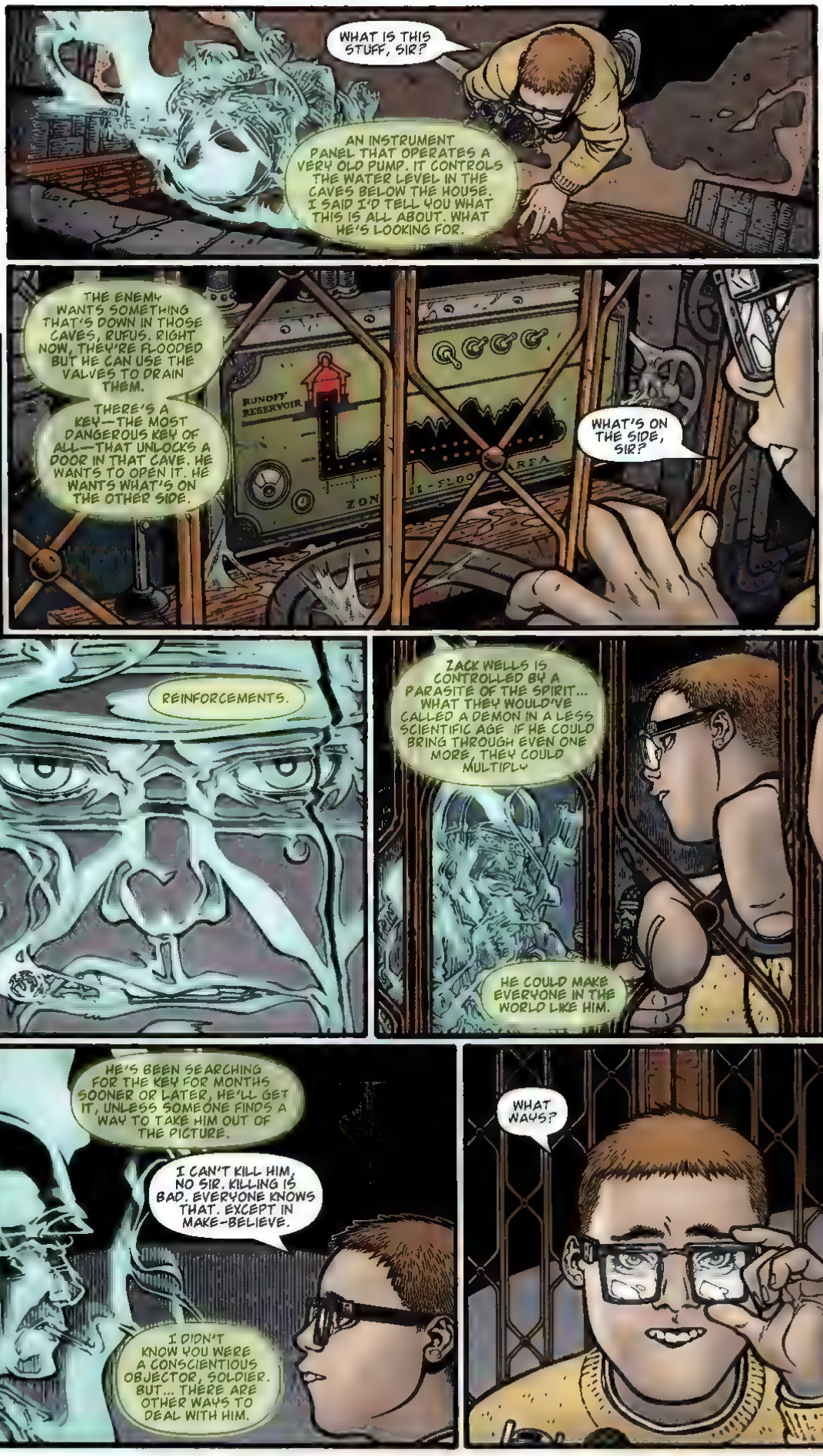

AFTER YOU'RE DONE, I WANT YOU TO TAKE THE KEY TO THE WINE CELLAR. JUST PUT IT SOMEPLACE I WON'T FIND IT. CAN YOU DO THAT?
SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM.
YOUR NAME IS RUFUS. YOU'RE THE TRACK COACH'S SON. YOU LIVE WITH THE ONE CALLED ZACK WELLS
THAT'S AFFIRMATIVE, SIR. WHAT ABOUT YOUR FAMILY? DO THEY KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

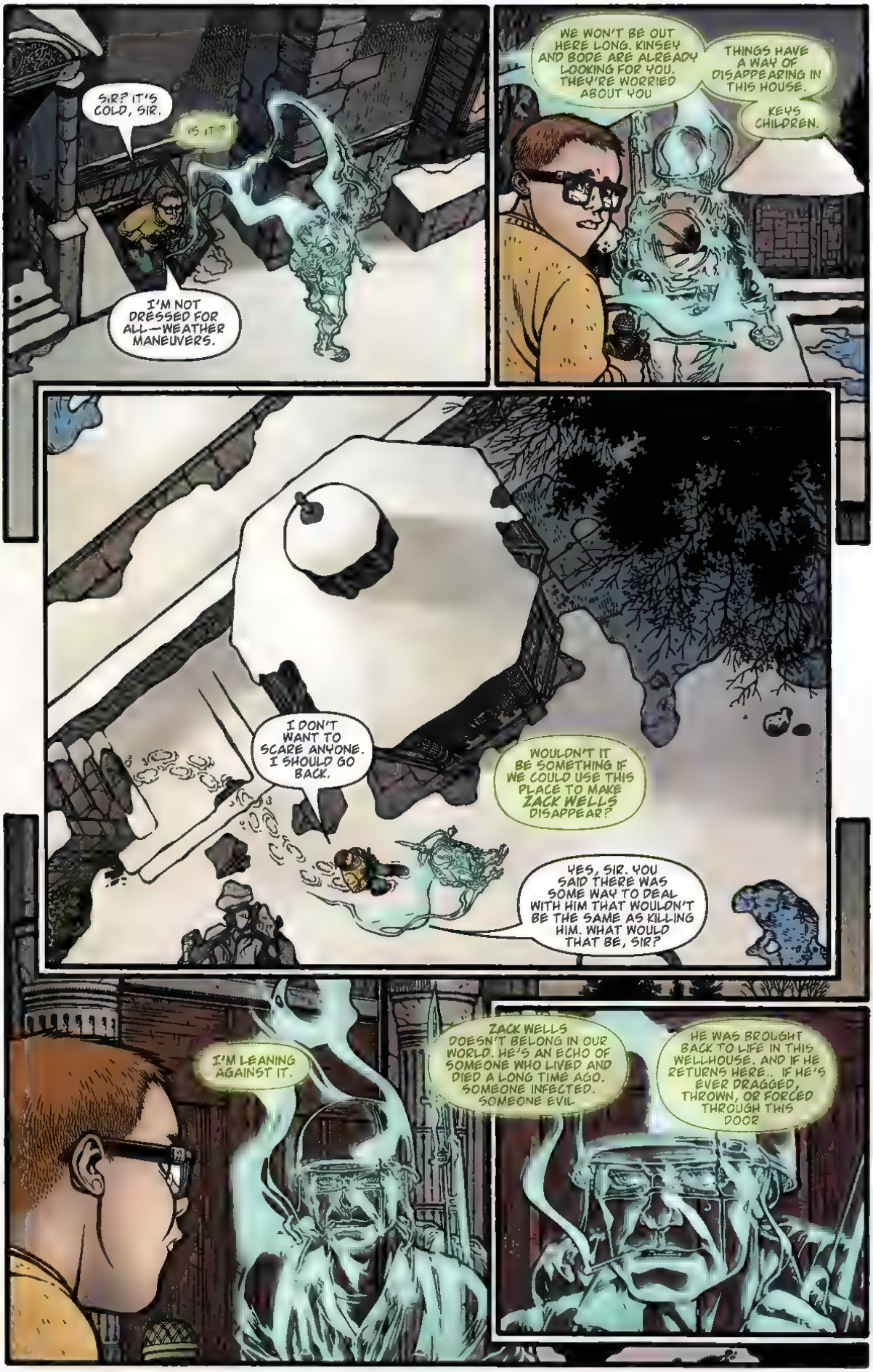

I'D BE GLAD TO WRITE SOME LETTERS TO YOUR MOTHER IF YOU WANT. I KNOW IF I FELL IN BATTLE, I'D WANT SOMEONE TO LET MY MOM KNOW I LOVED HER.
THANK YOU, RUFUS. THAT'S VERY KIND. YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT.
IT'D BE MY HONOR, SIR. I WRITE VERY GOOD LETTERS. I KNOW ALL THE LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET UP TO W AND I CAN WRITE THEM UPPER-CASE AND LOWER-CASE.
A, B, C, D, L, F, R, W...
THAT'S VERY GOOD, RUFUS. BUT YOU DON'T NEED TO WRITE MY MOTHER FOR ME.
TELL ME ABOUT YOUR MOTHER IS SHE A GOOD MOTHER? DOES SHE LOVE YOU?
OF COURSE SHE DOES. SHE LOVES ME BIG AS THE MOON. SHE ALWAYS SAYS SO.
MY MOTHER WAS SORRY SHE HAD ME.
I'M SURE THAT ISN'T TRUE, SIR.
IT IS. I WAS AN ACCIDENT. SHE OFTEN SAID SO. MY FATHER HATED ME FOR BEING SMARTER THAN HIM
SIR, I'M SURE BOTH OF YOUR PARENTS MISS YOU.
I'M SURE THEY DON'T. THEY'RE DEAD, TOO. KILLED. IN A WAY, THEY WERE ALSO CASUALTIES IN THIS WAR.
WHAT ABOUT YOUR FATHER, RUFUS?
MY FATHER ENLISTED AND SERVES HIS PROUD NATION HONORABLY AT THE AIR BASE IN BANGOR, MAINE. I'M JOINING UP TO SERVE AT HIS SIDE AS SOON AS I CAN.
JOINING THE REAL SERVICE, I MEAN. NOT SQUADRON STRANGE.

DO YOU KNOW WHO KILLED THEM?
YES. I'M AFRAID I DO. SOMEONE WHO THOUGHT HE COULD CUT A DEAL WITH THE ENEMY. BUT THERE ARE NO DEALS WITH HIM.
THE PERSON WHO KILLED THEM IS GONE NOW.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, RUFUS? DID YOU CUT SOME KIND OF DEAL WITH HIM?
WITH WHO?
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. I DON'T KNOW ANY REAL ENEMIES.
SOMETIMES I FIGHT VELOCIRAPTOR MEN AND SOMETIMES I FIGHT SADDAM HUSSEIN, BUT THEY'RE JUST PRETEND.
THE ENEMY I'M TALKING ABOUT LIVES IN THE SAME HOUSE WITH YOU. HE'S NOT WHAT HE APPEARS TO BE. HE LOOKS LIKE A BOY, BUT HE'S NOT.
HE'S BOTH MORE THAN THAT, AND QUITE A BIT LESS. AND...
...HE'S WATCHING YOU RIGHT NOW!
DON'T BE AFRAID HE SEES YOU, BUT HE CAN'T SEE ME, AND HE CAN'T HEAR EITHER OF US. HE DOESN'T KNOW WE'RE TALKING.
IF HE THINKS ANYTHING, HE THINKS YOU'RE TALKING TO YOUR TOYS.
WHY IS HE WATCHING ME? HOW CAN HE DO THAT?
DON'T BE AFRAID HE'S SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING. HE'S BEEN LOOKING OVER THE HOUSE ALL NIGHT, AND AT THE MOMENT HE'S LOOKING AT YOU

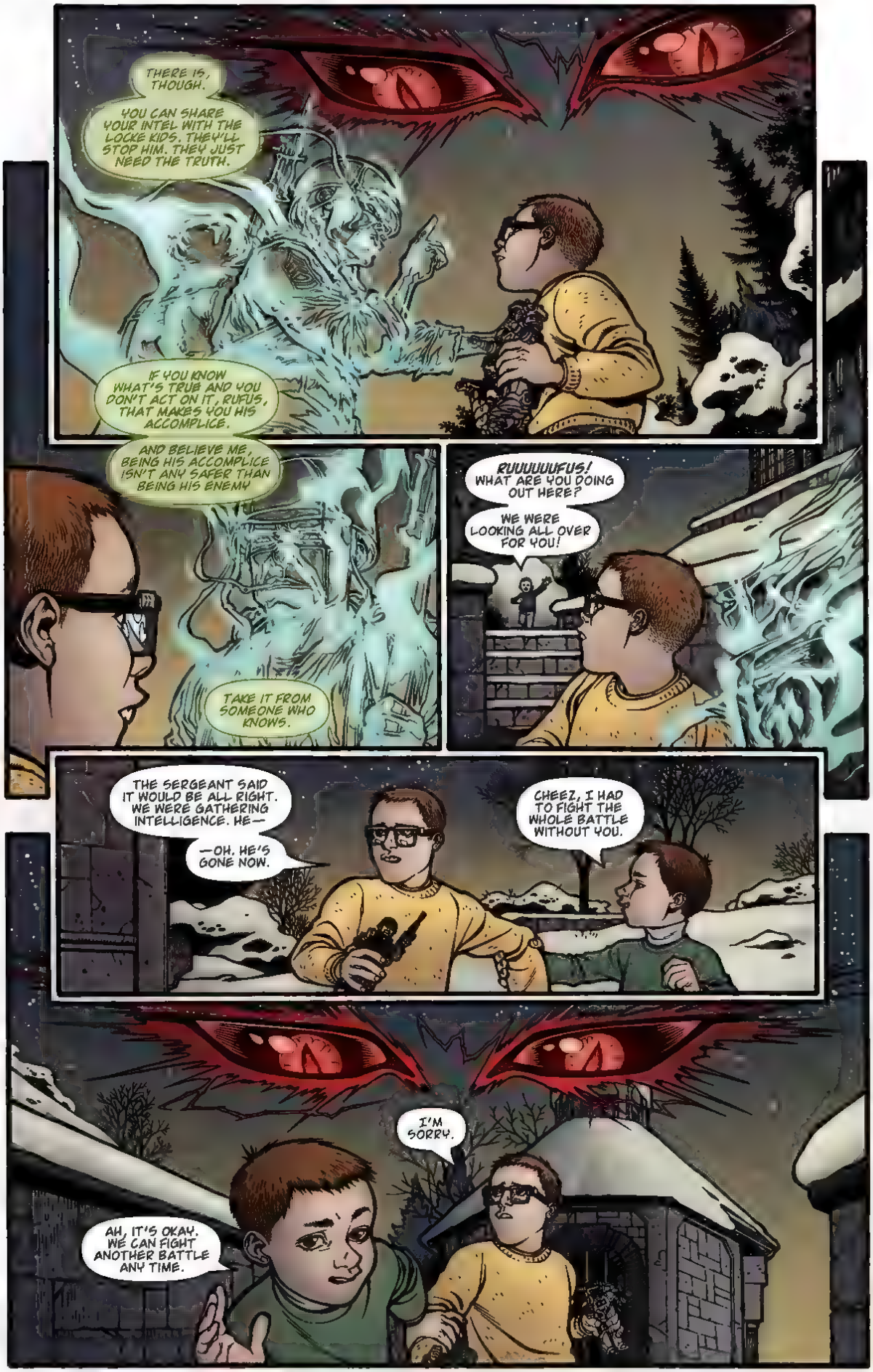
HE MAY ALSO BE KEEPING AN EYE ON YOU BECAUSE HE KNOWS YOU'RE DANGEROUS TO HIM
I TOLD YOU THIS HOUSE IS A BATTLEGROUND BUT I DIDN'T SAY WHAT'S BEING FOUGHT FOR HERE. MAYBE I SHOULD SHOW YOU.
FALL IN SOLDIER
OOO, I... I DON'T LIKE THE DARK. REQUEST PERMISSION TO ABORT MISSION.
NEGATIVE SOLDIER
I BROUGHT A LIGHT
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
THE CHAMBER OF THE LIVING SHADOWS
IS IT... IS IT SAFE?
THE SHADOWS SERVE WHOEVER HOLDS THE SHADOW KEY AND WEARS THE SHADOW CROWN. SOMETIMES RELUCTANTLY, BUT ALWAYS FAITHFULLY
ZACK WELLS IS USING A DIFFERENT KEY TO OBSERVE YOU, EVEN AT THIS MOMENT. THIS HOUSE IS FULL OF IMPOSSIBLE KEYS.
THEY ARE BOTH THE WEAPONS IN THE WAR, AND THE VALUABLES BEING FOUGHT OVER

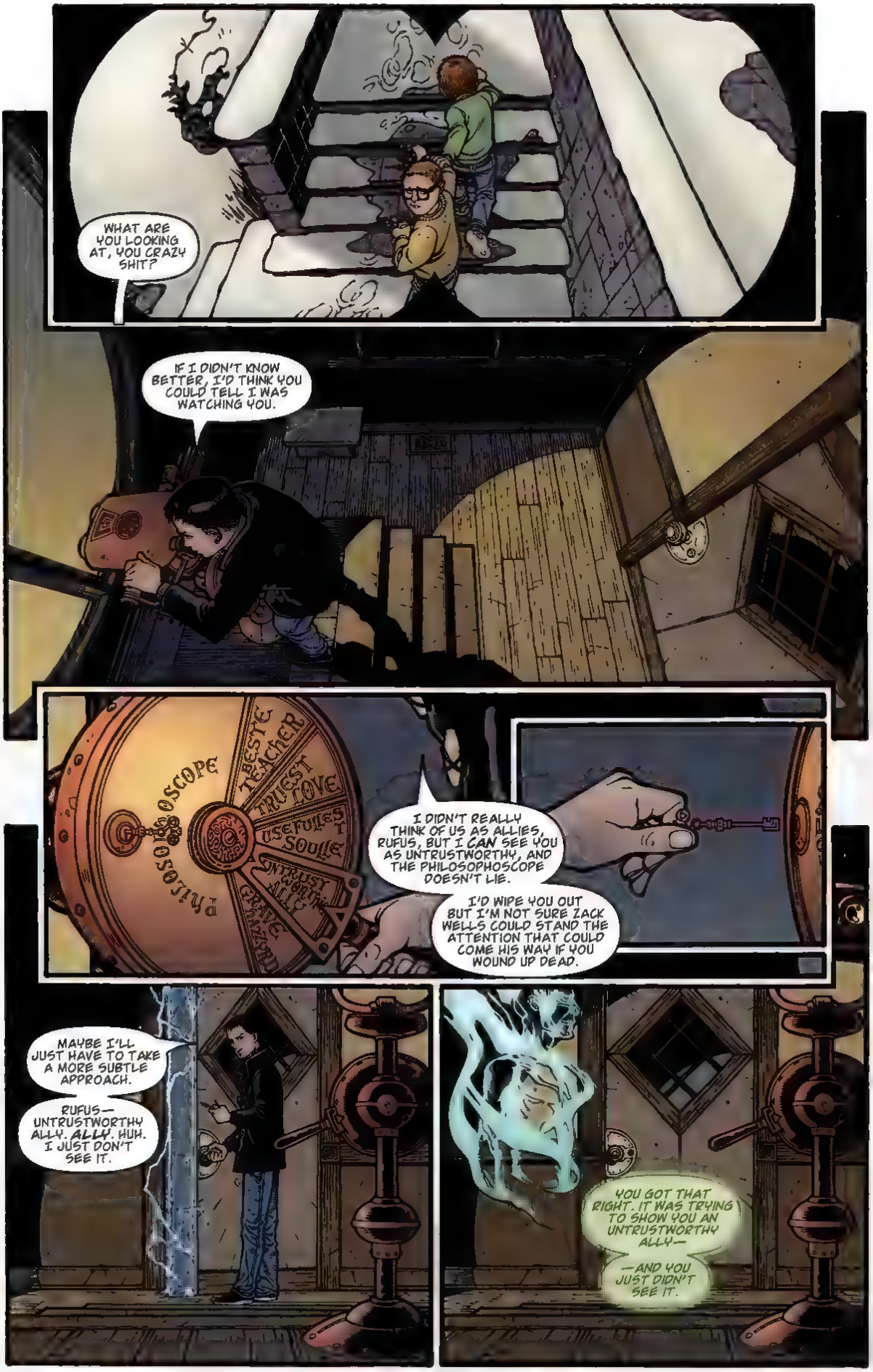

I'M SCARED. I DON'T LIKE IT HERE. I THINK I SHOULD GO. I THINK I WANT TO GO HOME.
HOME IS BETTER? WITH HIM LIVING THERE?
YOUR MOTHER MUST KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT HIM. SHE MUST KNOW HOW DANGEROUS HE IS. AND YET SHE SHELTERS HIM. GIVES AID AND COMFORT. . TO THE ENEMY.
HE'LL USE HER UNTIL SHE CAN'T SERVE HIM ANYMORE, THEN CUT HER DOWN. THAT'S WHAT HE DOES WITH HIS SERVANTS
STOP CRYING, RUFUS. IT'S TIME TO BE A MAN
I JUST WANT HIM TO GO AWAY, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.
YES, THERE IS, RUFUS. THIS IS WAR
SLIP A KNIFE IN HIS RIBS WHILE HE'S ASLEEP. GIVE YOUR MOTHER—GIVE US ALL—A HAPPY ENDING
SIR, NO SIR. NOT WHILE HE'S ASLEEP. THAT WOULD VIOLATE THE TERMS OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION.
ALSO, I'M NOT ALLOWED TO TOUCH THE KNIVES IN THE KITCHEN. IT'S ON THE CHALKBOARD WITH ALL MY RULES.

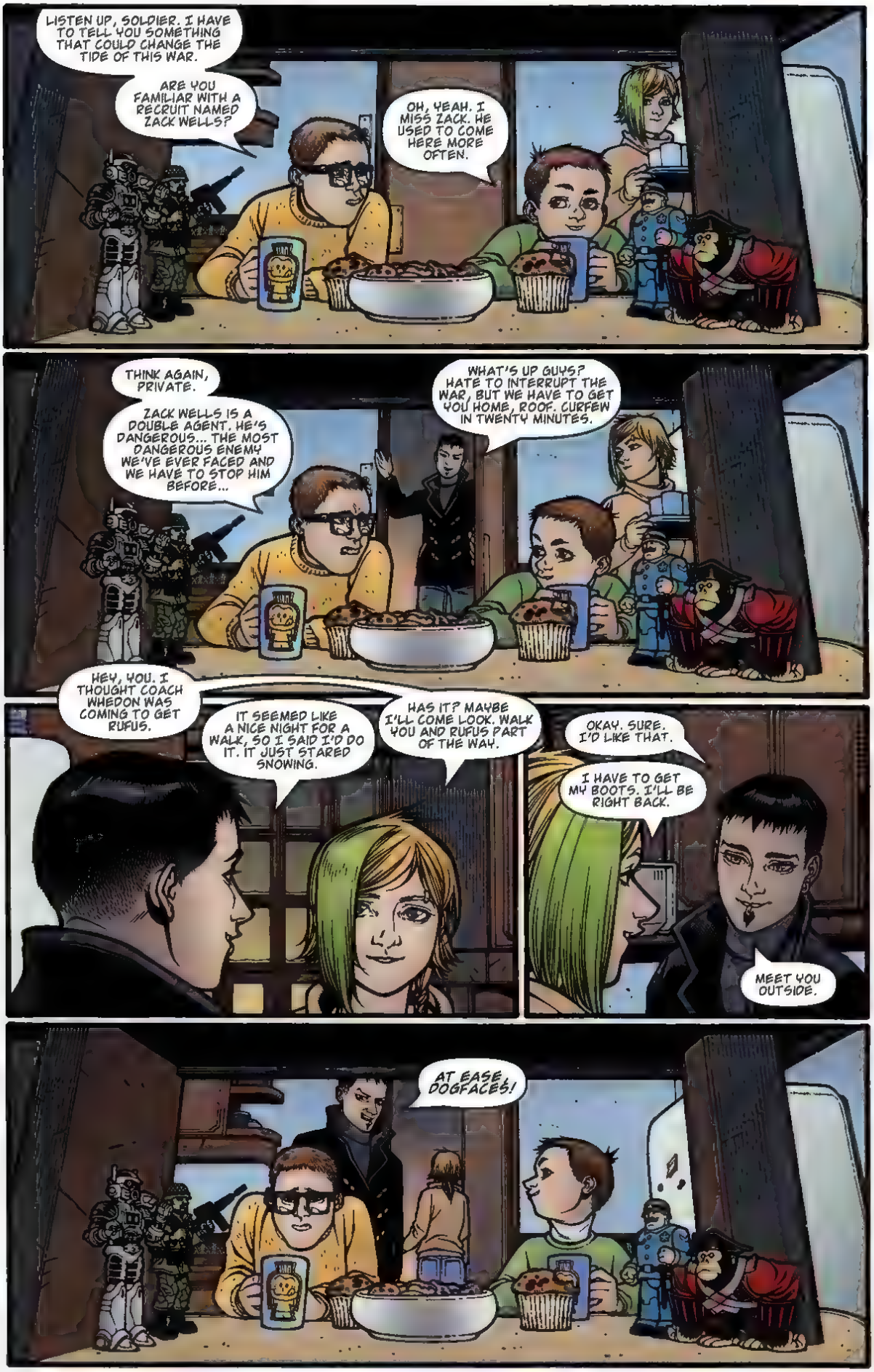

WHAT IS THIS STUFF, SIR?
AN INSTRUMENT PANEL THAT OPERATES A VERY OLD PUMP. IT CONTROLS THE WATER LEVEL IN THE CAVES BELOW THE HOUSE. I SAID I'D TELL YOU WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT. WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR.
THE ENEMY WANTS SOMETHING THAT'S DOWN IN THOSE CAVES, RUFUS. RIGHT NOW, THEY'RE FLOODED BUT HE CAN USE THE VALVES TO DRAIN THEM.
THERE'S A KEY—THE MOST DANGEROUS KEY OF ALL—THAT UNLOCKS A DOOR IN THAT CAVE. HE WANTS TO OPEN IT. HE WANTS WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE.
RUNOFF RESERVOIR
WHAT'S ON THE SIDE, SIR?
REINFORCEMENTS.
ZACK WELLS IS CONTROLLED BY A PARASITE OF THE SPIRIT... WHAT THEY WOULD'VE CALLED A DEMON IN A LESS SCIENTIFIC AGE. IF HE COULD BRING THROUGH EVEN ONE MORE, THEY COULD MULTIPLY
HE COULD MAKE EVERYONE IN THE WORLD LIKE HIM.
HE'S BEEN SEARCHING FOR THE KEY FOR MONTHS. SOONER OR LATER, HE'LL GET IT, UNLESS SOMEONE FINDS A WAY TO TAKE HIM OUT OF THE PICTURE.
I CAN'T KILL HIM, NO SIR. KILLING IS BAD. EVERYONE KNOWS THAT. EXCEPT IN MAKE-BELIEVE.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR, SOLDIER. BUT... THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO DEAL WITH HIM.
WHAT WAYS?

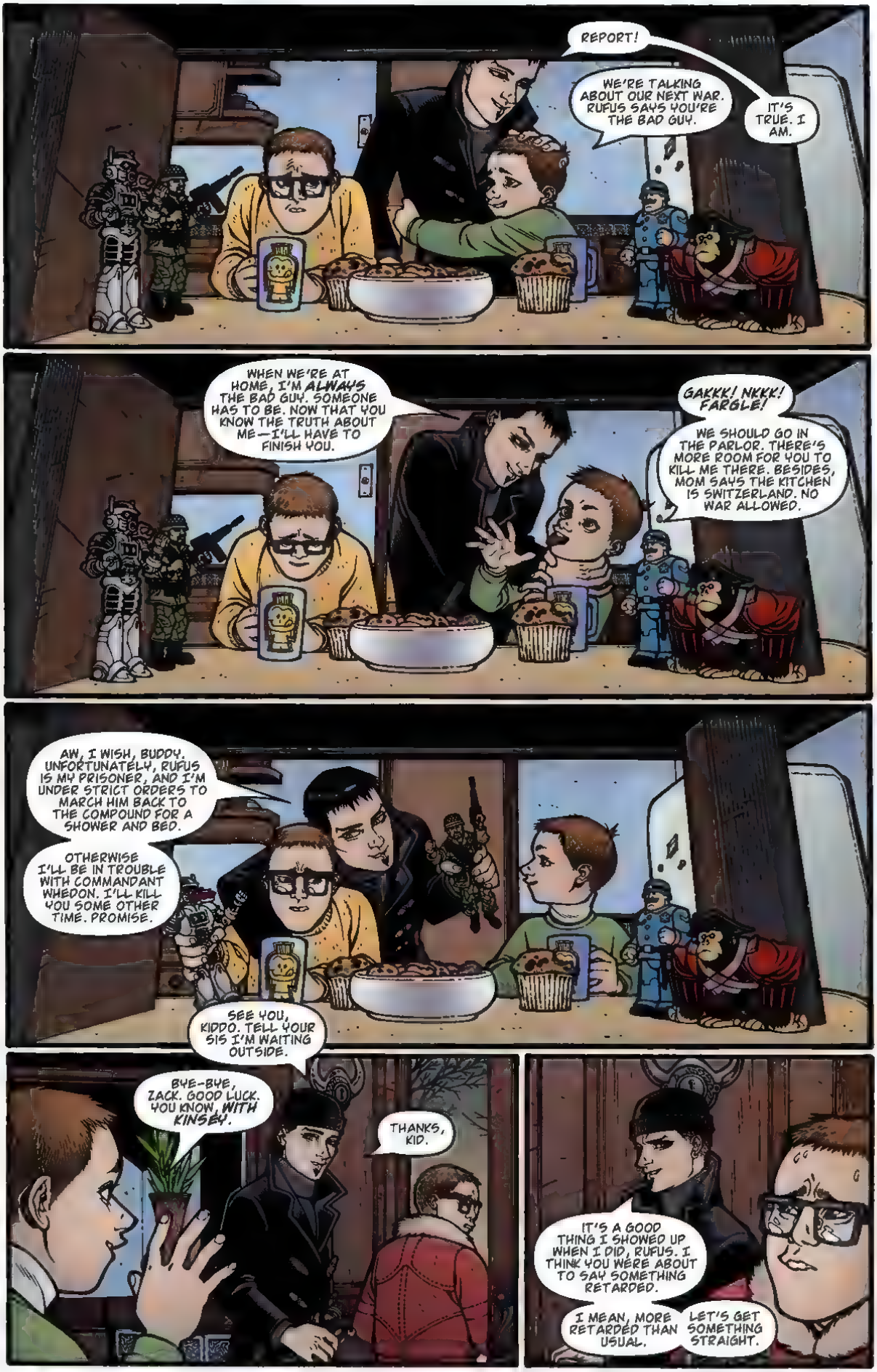

SIR? IT'S COLD, SIR.
IS IT?
I'M NOT DRESSED FOR ALL—WEATHER MANEUVERS.
WE WON'T BE OUT HERE LONG. KINSEY AND BODE ARE ALREADY LOOKING FOR YOU. THEY'RE WORRIED ABOUT YOU
THINGS HAVE A WAY OF DISAPPEARING IN THIS HOUSE.
KEYS CHILDREN.
I DON'T WANT TO SCARE ANYONE. I SHOULD GO BACK.
WOULDN'T IT BE SOMETHING IF WE COULD USE THIS PLACE TO MAKE ZACK WELLS DISAPPEAR?
YES, SIR. YOU SAID THERE WAS SOME WAY TO DEAL WITH HIM THAT WOULDN'T BE THE SAME AS KILLING HIM. WHAT WOULD THAT BE, SIR?
I'M LEANING AGAINST IT.
ZACK WELLS DOESN'T BELONG IN OUR WORLD. HE'S AN ECHO OF SOMEONE WHO LIVED AND DIED A LONG TIME AGO. SOMEONE INFECTED. SOMEONE EVIL
HE WAS BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE IN THIS WELLHOUSE. AND IF HE RETURNS HERE.. IF HE'S EVER DRAGGED, THROWN, OR FORCED THROUGH THIS DOOR

". HE'S HISTORY."
DO YOU READ ME, PRIVATE?
SIR, YES SIR.
IT'LL NEVER HAPPEN, SIR. I'M NOT TOUGH ENOUGH. I'M NOT SMART ENOUGH. I'M SORRY, SIR.
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.

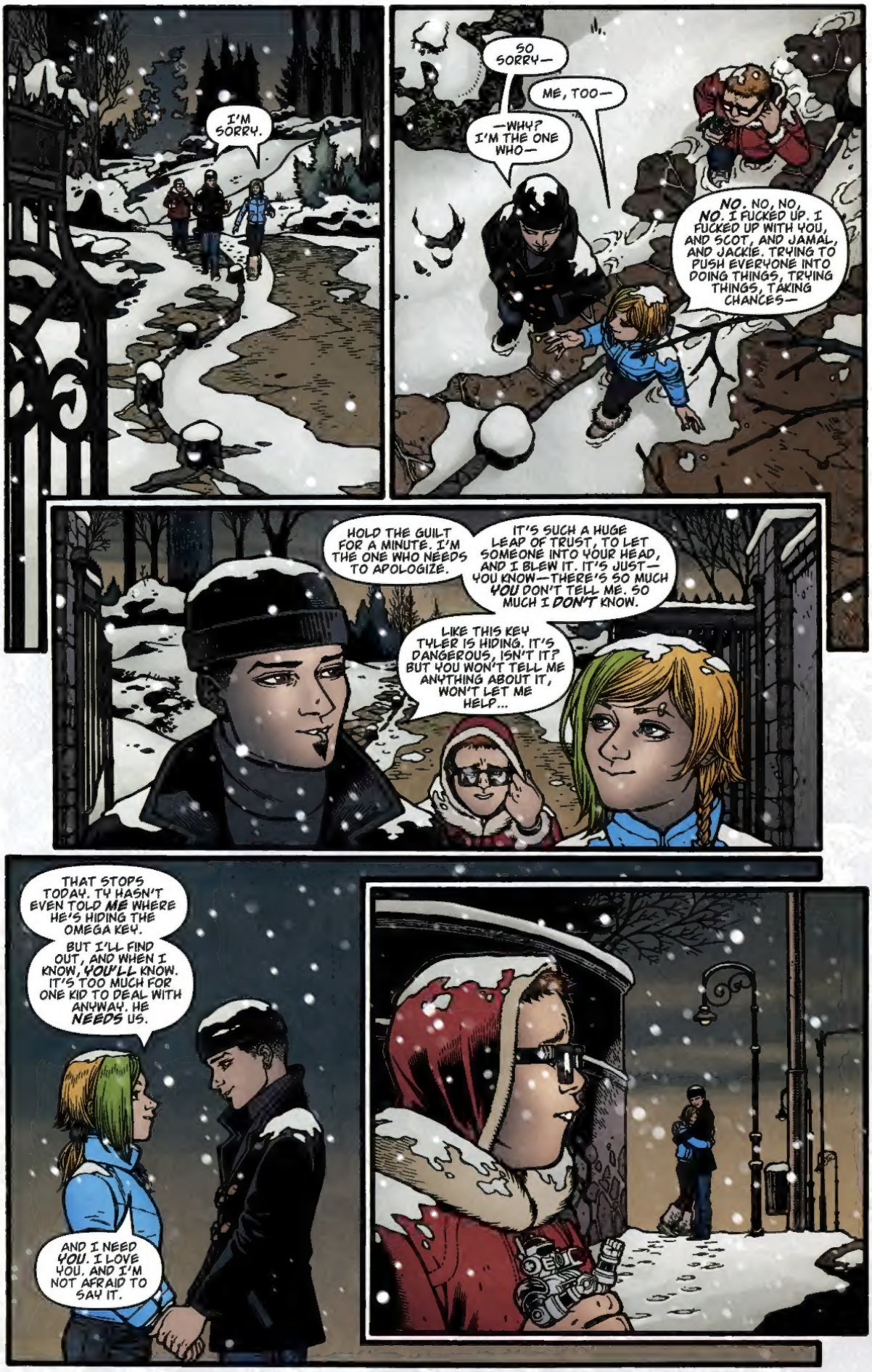

THERE IS, THOUGH.
YOU CAN SHARE YOUR INTEL WITH THE LOCKE KIDS. THEY'LL STOP HIM. THEY JUST NEED THE TRUTH.
IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S TRUE AND YOU DON'T ACT ON IT, RUFUS, THAT MAKES YOU HIS ACCOMPLICE.
AND BELIEVE ME, BEING HIS ACCOMPLICE ISN'T ANY SAFER THAN BEING HIS ENEMY
TAKE IT FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS.
RUUUUUUFUS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?
WE WERE LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU!
THE SERGEANT SAID IT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT. WE WERE GATHERING INTELLIGENCE. HE—
—OH. HE'S GONE NOW.
CHEEZ, I HAD TO FIGHT THE WHOLE BATTLE WITHOUT YOU.
I'M SORRY.
AH, IT'S OKAY. WE CAN FIGHT ANOTHER BATTLE ANY TIME.

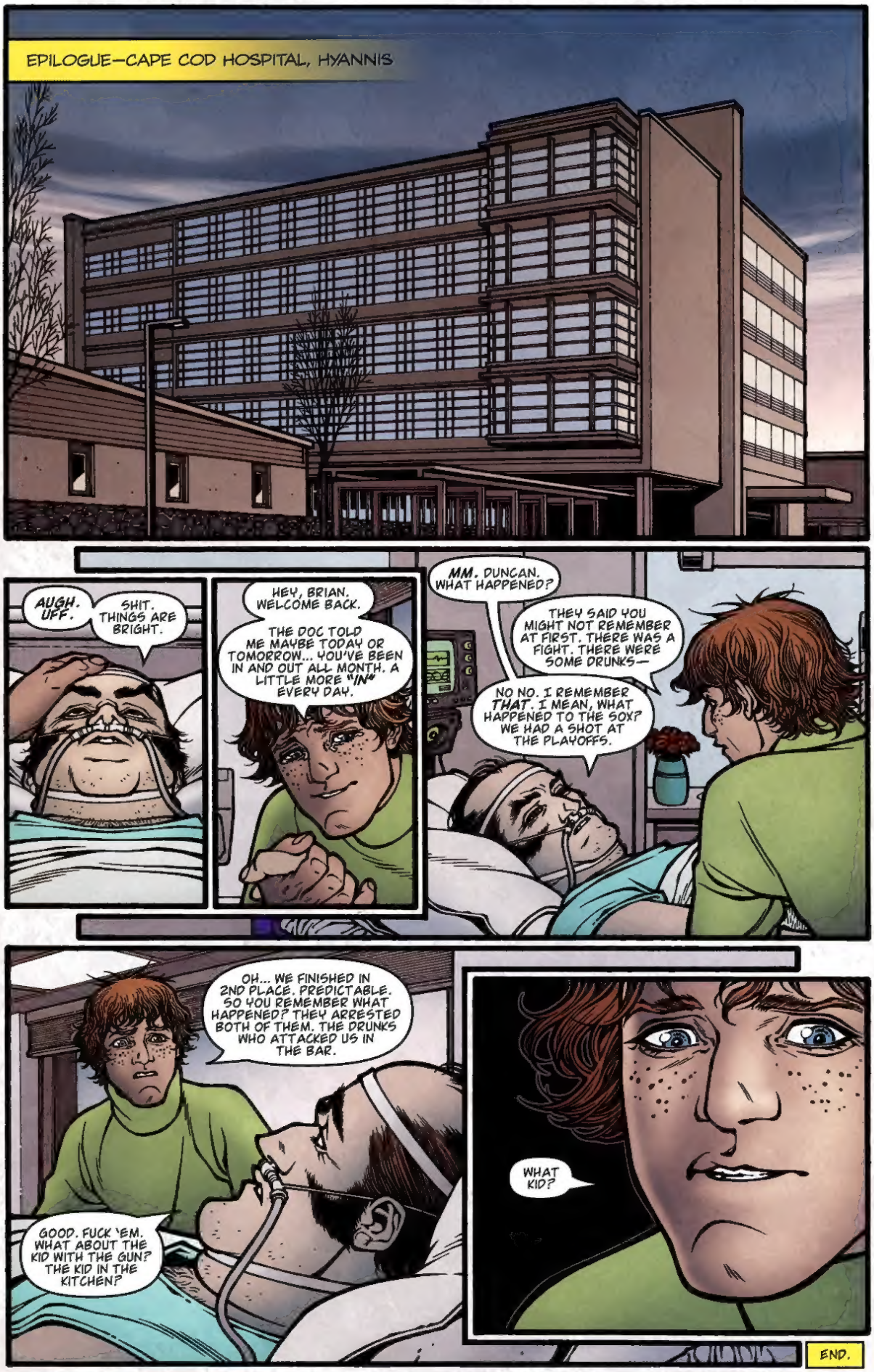

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT, YOU CRAZY SHIT?
IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D THINK YOU COULD TELL I WAS WATCHING YOU.
PHILOSOPHOSCOPE
BESTE TEACHER
TRUEST LOVE
USEFULEST SOULE
UNTRUSTWORTHY ALLY
GRAVE DANGER
I DIDN'T REALLY THINK OF US AS ALLIES, RUFUS, BUT I CAN SEE YOU AS UNTRUSTWORTHY, AND THE PHILOSOPHOSCOPE DOESN'T LIE.
I'D WIPE YOU OUT BUT I'M NOT SURE ZACK WELLS COULD STAND THE ATTENTION THAT COULD COME HIS WAY IF YOU WOUND UP DEAD.
MAYBE I'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE A MORE SUBTLE APPROACH.
RUFUS— UNTRUSTWORTHY ALLY. ALLY. HUH. I JUST DON'T SEE IT.
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT. IT WAS TRYING TO SHOW YOU AN UNTRUSTWORTHY ALLY—
—AND YOU JUST DIDN'T SEE IT.


LISTEN UP, SOLDIER. I HAVE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING THAT COULD CHANGE THE TIDE OF THIS WAR.
ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH A RECRUIT NAMED ZACK WELLS?
OH, YEAH. I MISS ZACK. HE USED TO COME HERE MORE OFTEN.
THINK AGAIN, PRIVATE.
ZACK WELLS IS A DOUBLE AGENT. HE'S DANGEROUS... THE MOST DANGEROUS ENEMY WE'VE EVER FACED AND WE HAVE TO STOP HIM BEFORE...
WHAT'S UP GUYS? HATE TO INTERRUPT THE WAR, BUT WE HAVE TO GET YOU HOME, ROOF. CURFEW IN TWENTY MINUTES.
HEY, YOU. I THOUGHT COACH WHEDON WAS COMING TO GET RUFUS.
IT SEEMED LIKE A NICE NIGHT FOR A WALK, SO I SAID I'D DO IT. IT JUST STARED SNOWING.
HAS IT? MAYBE I'LL COME LOOK. WALK YOU AND RUFUS PART OF THE WAY.
OKAY. SURE. I'D LIKE THAT.
I HAVE TO GET MY BOOTS. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
MEET YOU OUTSIDE.
AT EASE, DOGFACES!


REPORT!
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT OUR NEXT WAR. RUFUS SAYS YOU'RE THE BAD GUY.
IT'S TRUE. I AM.
WHEN WE'RE AT HOME, I'M ALWAYS THE BAD GUY. SOMEONE HAS TO BE. NOW THAT YOU KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT ME—I'LL HAVE TO FINISH YOU.
GAKKK! NKKK! FARGLE!
WE SHOULD GO IN THE PARLOR. THERE'S MORE ROOM FOR YOU TO KILL ME THERE. BESIDES, MOM SAYS THE KITCHEN IS SWITZERLAND. NO WAR ALLOWED.
AW, I WISH, BUDDY, UNFORTUNATELY, RUFUS IS MY PRISONER, AND I'M UNDER STRICT ORDERS TO MARCH HIM BACK TO THE COMPOUND FOR A SHOWER AND BED.
OTHERWISE I'LL BE IN TROUBLE WITH COMMANDANT WHEDON. I'LL KILL YOU SOME OTHER TIME. PROMISE.
SEE YOU, KIDDO. TELL YOUR SIS I'M WAITING OUTSIDE.
BYE-BYE, ZACK. GOOD LUCK. YOU KNOW, WITH KINSEY.
THANKS, KID.
IT'S A GOOD THING I SHOWED UP WHEN I DID, RUFUS. I THINK YOU WERE ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING RETARDED.
I MEAN, MORE RETARDED THAN USUAL.
LET'S GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT.

YOU EVER TALK TO THE LOCKE KIDS OR ANYONE ELSE ABOUT ME, THEY'LL TAKE YOUR MOTHER AWAY AND PUT HER IN JAIL AND YOU'LL NEVER SEE HER AGAIN.
I THOUGHT YOU ALREADY UNDERSTOOD THAT, OR I NEVER WOULD'VE LET YOU COME HERE.
THEY'D HAVE TO PUT YOU IN FOSTER CARE. YOUR DAD ISN'T GOING TO HELP YOU. WHY DO YOU THINK HE JOINED THE AIR FORCE?
TO GET AWAY FROM YOU.
THEY'LL PUT YOU IN A STATE HOME, WITH CRIMINALS AND DRUG USERS. YOU KNOW WHAT THOSE KIDS WOULD DO WITH A LITTLE RETARD LIKE YOU?
TEAR YOU APART.
HEY
HEY
AND SO.. A HERO FALLS!
JACK NIFE IS GONE .. BUT THE WAR GOES ON!


I'M SORRY.
SO SORRY—
ME, TOO—
—WHY? I'M THE ONE WHO—
NO. NO, NO, NO. I FUCKED UP. I FUCKED UP WITH YOU, AND SCOT, AND JAMAL, AND JACKIE. TRYING TO PUSH EVERYONE INTO DOING THINGS, TRYING THINGS, TAKING CHANCES—
HOLD THE GUILT FOR A MINUTE. I'M THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO APOLOGIZE.
IT'S SUCH A HUGE LEAP OF TRUST, TO LET SOMEONE INTO YOUR HEAD, AND I BLEW IT. IT'S JUST—YOU KNOW—THERE'S SO MUCH YOU DON'T TELL ME. SO MUCH I DON'T KNOW.
LIKE THIS KEY TYLER IS HIDING. IT'S DANGEROUS, ISN'T IT? BUT YOU WON'T TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT IT, WON'T LET ME HELP...
THAT STOPS TODAY. TY HASN'T EVEN TOLD ME WHERE HE'S HIDING THE OMEGA KEY.
BUT I'LL FIND OUT, AND WHEN I KNOW, YOU'LL KNOW. IT'S TOO MUCH FOR ONE KID TO DEAL WITH ANYWAY. HE NEEDS US.
AND I NEED YOU. I LOVE YOU. AND I'M NOT AFRAID TO SAY IT.


EPILOGUE—CAPE COD HOSPITAL, HYANNIS
AUGH. UFF.
SHIT. THINGS ARE BRIGHT.
HEY, BRIAN. WELCOME BACK.
THE DOC TOLD ME MAYBE TODAY OR TOMORROW... YOU'VE BEEN IN AND OUT ALL MONTH. A LITTLE MORE "IN" EVERY DAY.
MM. DUNCAN. WHAT HAPPENED?
THEY SAID YOU MIGHT NOT REMEMBER AT FIRST. THERE WAS A FIGHT. THERE WERE SOME DRUNKS—
NO NO. I REMEMBER THAT. I MEAN, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SOX? WE HAD A SHOT AT THE PLAYOFFS.
OH... WE FINISHED IN 2ND PLACE. PREDICTABLE. SO YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED? THEY ARRESTED BOTH OF THEM. THE DRUNKS WHO ATTACKED US IN THE BAR.
GOOD. FUCK 'EM. WHAT ABOUT THE KID WITH THE GUN? THE KID IN THE KITCHEN?
WHAT KID?
END.

NEXT ISSUE #5

KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

LOCKE & KEY

THE
PROLETARIAT
DGP